

## MANAGEMENT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

### PREAMBLE

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus. COVID-19 is transmitted from someone who is infected with the virus to others in close contact through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing or by contact with contaminated hands or surfaces. According to Department of Health, the time of exposure to the virus and when symptoms first occur is anywhere from 2-14 days.

Symptoms can range from a mild illness, similar to a cold or flu, to pneumonia. People with COVID-19 may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- shortness of breath

Other symptoms can include:

- runny nose
- headache
- muscle or joint pains
- nausea
- diarrhoea
- vomiting
- loss of sense of smell
- altered sense of taste
- loss of appetite
- fatigue.

The [Australian Government](#) is constantly updating the current status of COVID-19 including health recommendations, travel restrictions, and a vast collection of resources and information to help people make informed decisions.

As this information is changing rapidly, our Service is constantly monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

Our Service has a range of comprehensive policies in place to guide best practice around health and safety, dealing with infectious diseases and maintaining a child safe environment. Our duty of care and responsibilities to children, parents, families and all staff is to provide a safe environment.

The evolving nature of COVID-19 and the unprecedented steps required to protect our community as recommended by the Australian Government, has resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist our Service manage this pandemic.

This policy will change as required to ensure the protective measures against COVID-19 as advised by our government are implemented by our Service.

### AIM

Our Service will minimise staff and children's exposure to COVID-19 by adhering to all 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. Our 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 Health Department will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Families can call the National COVID-19 hotline for more information on 1800 020 080 and call 131 450 for translating and interpreting.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Leadership will:

- Commit to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus by implementing recommendations provided by the [Australian Government- Department of Health](#).
- Put control measures in place to eliminate and/or reduce risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, visitors and children.
- Implement procedures as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council as part of our day-to-day operation of the Service.
- Follow explicit decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease by the Australian Government- Department of Health and SA Health. COVID-19 is a notifiable condition in all states and territories of Australia.
- Follow any hygiene or health directions from the Public Health Unit and ensure these directions are implemented throughout the site.
- In the event of any child, educator, staff member or visitor attending our Service who is suspected or confirmed to have the infection, will contact SA Health.
- Ensure hand hygiene posters and procedures and information about COVID-19 is clearly displayed at the front entry and communicated to families through email, newsletters and social media. This information provided may include: symptoms of COVID-19, transmission of the virus, self-isolation and exclusion, prevention strategies- including hygiene and self-isolation, contact details for health assistance and payment of fees.
- Ensure there is a supply of disposable tissues and have bins available with plastic liners available in several locations for disposing used items.
- Cancel attendance of any non-essential staff or visitors.
- Ensure cleaning contractors hygienically clean the Service to ensure risk of contamination is removed as per [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
- Allow community groups on-site if they have appropriate plans in place to keep facilitators and participants safe and they can comply with current social distancing requirements/room capacity.
- Reserves the right to prevent employees, parents, family members or visitors to enter the premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Will require all visitors to the site to sign the site's 'agreement on entering'.
- Notify the SA Health or [Health Information hotline](#) on 1800 020 080 of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) within 24 hours.
- Notify PRODA if we are required to close and any other funding entities.
- Maintain the right to privacy for any visitors, staff or children when reporting suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to authorities and informing families.
- 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.
- Have a procedure in place for closing the site in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or being unable to open due to lack of attendance.
- In event of a closure, provide information to families to help explain the situation to young children.
- Close the site if advised by the state government or the Regulatory Authority.
- Notify all families of a site closure immediately via email or phone.
- Communicate process of reopening after a closure with families via email or phone.
- Display prescribed information around confirmed cases at the site, if required.

- Follow standard local emergency procedures from 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, should our service be directed to shut down due to COVID-19. Activating a period of local emergency will allow families access to additional absences if the initial 42 absence days per child per financial year have been used.
- Waive out of pocket fees for the period 30 June until 31 December 2020 if the site is forced to close on public health advice as a result of COVID-19.
- Not require a medical certificate for additional absences claimed due to COVID-19 related reasons, until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- Understand the Centre is not liable for Government assistance if they choose to close when not ordered to by Health Authorities.
- Negotiate leave entitlements and pay conditions with staff who are required to self-isolate or are quarantined due to the virus; or in the event of a site closure.
- Apply to the Regulatory Authority for waivers for qualifications and/or ratios to minimise disruptions to our provision of care if staff are away due to illness or self-isolation
- Notify the Regulatory Authority of any changes to the site's operation.
- Research funding to help cover business costs, including wages.
- Maintain continuity of care by replacing unwell or isolated staff with regular relief staff.
- Keep a register of vulnerable staff and staff who are self-isolating in case of an outbreak at the site
- Complete a risk assessment for any vulnerable employees to ensure they can work safely on-site.
- Inform staff when another staff member has chosen to self-isolate in order to keep them informed of staffing arrangements.
- Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff to complete at home if unwell or isolating.
- Encourage staff to take annual leave where possible to support rostering limited staff on-site
- Ensure all people who enter the site are following appropriate hygiene guidelines including washing and sanitising their hands and are signing the appropriate visitor forms and register. This information will be stored securely and only accessed by appropriate staff and health authorities if required.
- Provide single use pens for visitors and sanitise stationary as needed.
- Keep attendance records of children who attend sessions during Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package period.
- Be aware of 'at-risk' children and families who attend the site and contact support agencies on these families' behalf if required.
- Have a procedure in place to prioritise offering additional bookings if requested while Centre has reduced capacity/income.
- Oversee organising bookings for returning and new families
- Apply for funding streams to ensure the Centre remains viable.
- Submit waivers to the Regulatory Authority should the operation of the Centre be affected (i.e. ratios affected due to staff illness, closure periods)
- Issue any changes to employment conditions or responsibilities in writing
- Keep records of written communication around agreements to take specific kind of leave or changes to contract during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Ensure staff are kept informed of changes to policies and procedures, including keeping records of all correspondence distributed to staff.
- Oversee all governance decisions with the support of the site's Governing Council.
- Oversee the provision of Foodbank vouchers in lieu of Foodbank being provided for families.
- Inform families via email when restrictions or procedures are implemented and when they cease to be in effect.

- Communicate sanitisation and cleaning needs with the cleaner and negotiate amended schedules during COVID-19 outbreak.
- Oversee site cleaning undertaken by Department for Education cleaners during daily high touch surface clean.
- Oversee process of deep cleaning if site needs to close due to confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Ensure adequate supplies of cleaning chemicals, hand sanitiser, gloves and other protective equipment are available on-site.
- Negotiate with allied health professionals (including community staff based on-site, professionals referred by families and group facilitators) to organise their return to the site and plan visits to maintain health and safety of the professionals, other staff and children.
- Ensure session reports are submitted to the Child Care Subsidy System from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July.
- From 21<sup>st</sup> August, ensure a voluntary COVID-Safe plan is in place and a COVID marshal is trained prior to any events or large gatherings.
- Communicate with parents and families the risk mitigation strategies to be adhered to during any group celebrations- end of year concert, graduation etc.

#### **Educators will:**

- Ensure hand sanitiser is available and out of reach of young children / only available for adults to use.
- Follow exclusion periods as dictated by the Australian Government and inform the Centre if they are required to self-isolate. Conditions for self-isolation include:
  - any person entering South Australia from overseas, will be required to self-isolate for 14 days
  - any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis, or suspected diagnosis of the virus, must self-isolate for 14 days
  - household members of a person (including children) who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the site and general public
  - the Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation.
- If displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, seek urgent medical attention to determine the need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service **under any circumstance.**
- If unwell with any symptoms associated with COVID, they must tell Leadership and stay home until symptoms are gone even if they have received a negative COVID test. Documentation (medical certificate) is required for absences longer than 3 days and clearances may need to be presented before an employee returns to work.
- Stay home if confirmed to have COVID-19 and not return to work until they have completed a period of self-isolation for at least 14 days. They cannot return to work until they have no symptoms and have been advised they no longer need to isolate by their doctor or public health unit. Employees with sick leave are able to use this leave to cover all or part of their isolation due to illness.
- Inform the Centre if they wish to self-isolate as precaution and negotiate to take annual leave, unpaid leave or use any RDOs or TOIL.
- Inform Leadership if they are remaining home to care for a sick family member. Permanent employees caring for family are able to access paid carer's leave, but may need to provide documentation.
- Inform Leadership if they have had close or casual contact with a confirmed or probably case of COVID-19.
- Inform Leadership if they have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting test results. Once they receive their results, they should inform Leadership of whether the result was positive or negative.
- If unable to attend work due to being quarantined when returning from overseas or interstate travel, can use annual leave or unpaid leave entitlements to cover this absence.

- If unable to complete usual duties on-site due to COVID-19 related reasons, may be asked to complete different duties to receive normal pay such as professional development, documentation, cleaning, creating online curriculum resources.
- Sign to any written communication around agreements to take specific kind of leave or changes to contract during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Ensure they are up to date on hot spots and self-isolate/quarantine as necessary and inform the site.
- If confirmed to have COVID-19, know they are unable to attend the workplace and cannot return to work until they have completed a period of self-isolation of at least 14 days and receive a negative test result. Employees must make a declaration that they are *fit for work* and have no symptoms of COVID-19 for the past 72 hours (3 days). A doctor's certificate or clearance is not required.
- Be aware that from 8 April 2020 to 29 March 2021 they can access unpaid pandemic leave if required to self-isolate by government or medical authorities or acting on advice of a medical practitioner. They must make this agreement in writing with Leadership and the employer needs to keep it as a record. This leave provides employees with:
  - 2 weeks of unpaid pandemic leave
  - the ability to take twice as much annual leave at half their normal pay if their employer agrees.
- Follow handwashing guidelines and support children to do so including using soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever they cough, sneeze or blow their nose, prepare food or eat, touch their face or use the toilet.
- Wash hands with soap and water and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival to the site.
- Dry hands using disposable paper and dispose in bins provided
- Use disposable tissues to wipe noses, eyes or mouth and dispose of in bins provided and wash hands after using tissues
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or elbow and encourage children to do the same.
- Adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures
- Wash their hands or use hand sanitiser, before wearing gloves and wash hands after wearing gloves
- Clean and disinfect high contact surfaces and equipment (such as toys, puzzles, outdoor toys, bedding, playdough etc) as per site cleaning registers.
- Ensure resources and experiences set up for children are able to be sanitised safely (i.e. hard toys over soft toys, toys that can be submerged in sanitiser etc.)
- Maintain a cleaning register of all surfaces and equipment where sanitisation has been completed.
- Ensure equipment, resources and surfaces including taps, door handles etc. are cleaned and sanitised multiple times daily in addition to the end of day clean.
- Promote outdoor play to provide children to best ensure maximum personal space.
- Sanitise outdoor equipment after lunch and at the end of the day.
- Facilitate small group times that fit with guidelines around appropriate social distancing for adults and limiting numbers of people in enclosed spaces.
- Communicate with families with children who have chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression as they may be at an increased risk of disease and discuss additional support/care
- Contact families for collection if a child:
  - Displays symptoms of a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)
  - has any symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. runny nose, cough, fever, loss of smell/taste)
  - is unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
  - has a temperature/fever of 38°C or higher
  - has vomited in the last 24 hours
  - has diarrhoea in the last 24 hours
  - have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the site

- have started a course of antibiotics in the last 24 hours
- Inform families they must collect unwell children within 20 minutes. If child is not collected after 30 minutes, an emergency contact will be called.
- Inform families of children sent home with vomit or diarrhoea (loose bowel movement) that they can return to the Centre 24 hours after last vomit or loose bowel movement, providing that they display no other symptoms common to COVID-19.
- Inform families of children sent home with persistent runny nose or cough that they can return to the Centre with a doctor's clearance stating the child does not have an infectious illness.
- Will help children with fevers regulate their temperature by removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers) and encouraging them to take sips of water.
- Keep accurate records of the child's temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member's name and time of collection.
- Provide age appropriate information provided to children about COVID-19 that is sensitive to their emotional wellbeing. Educators will acknowledge children's concerns and be open to discussions about COVID-19.
- 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.
- Model effective hand washing practices for children
- Monitor children's emotional well-being and communicate any concerns with families.
- Respect children's questions and offer support when answering.
- Ensure they are sanitising equipment used if working out of hours and following Centre sanitising procedures for themselves and their work station
- Wash their hands upon arrival at the Centre, in addition to the use of hand sanitiser.
- Support children to wash their hands upon arrival in the room, including use of hand sanitiser. Hand washing will be staggered to avoid groups of children in a small, enclosed space.
- If desired, staff can wear gloves or masks while working in the room. However, staff who become unwell must stay home until all symptoms are clear.
- Make themselves known to Leadership if they are considered vulnerable i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions, 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions, 70 years and older or have compromised immune systems (see Department of Health website for more details)
- If vulnerable, be aware they may be asked to seek a medical clearance to be at work, be given amended duties or be asked to work from home as a precaution.
- Ensure hand sanitiser is put at the front gates when opening and put away at night when closing.
- Sign children in and out of the Centre on the site iPads after handover with families.
- Practice social distancing with other staff where possible including avoiding congregating in prep room, store room and staff room.
- Use alternative spaces such as outdoor areas, group rooms and piazza to ensure as much space per child as possible.
- In the Reeds room, set up space for children to sleep outside on the verandah during sleep times. Attention will be paid to closing the blinds and providing adequate coverings to ensure children are safe and comfortable when sleeping outside.
- Inform Leadership if they are self-isolating for any reason (i.e. confirmed case, contact with confirmed case, as a precaution).
- Deliver an online curriculum as part of the Preschool program to families who cannot or choose not to attend Preschool.
- Be encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccination to protect themselves against strains of influenza.

- Be informed in writing of any changes to rostered shifts or entitlements.
- Abide by any state specific guidelines set out by SA Health.

**Families will:**

- Follow exclusion periods as dictated by the Australian Government and inform the Centre if they are required to self-isolate. Conditions for self-isolation include:
  - any person entering South Australia from overseas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days
  - any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis, or suspected diagnosis of the virus, must self-isolate for 14 days
  - household members of a person (including children) who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 must also be isolated from the site and general public
  - the Public Health Unit will provide further information on a case-by-case basis as to the length and place of isolation.
- If displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend our Service **under any circumstance.**
- Follow handwashing guidelines and encourage children to do so including using soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever they cough, sneeze or blow their nose, prepare food or eat, touch their face or use the toilet.
- Wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided upon arrival to site
- Dry hands using disposable paper and dispose in bins provided
- Use disposable tissues to wipe noses, eyes or mouth and dispose of in bins provided and wash hands after using tissues
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or elbow and support children to do the same.
- Ensure they are using new pens and putting them aside once done to be sanitised.
- Keep children who are unwell home.
- Stay home if they or another family member is unwell
- Communicate with the Centre if they have children who have chronic medical conditions or immunosuppression as they may be at an increased risk of disease and discuss additional support/care
- Collect their child promptly (within 20 minutes of being called) if contacted by the Centre due to symptoms of illness and sign any illness records upon collection.
- Seek advice from their GP if their child displays symptoms of COVID-19 including runny nose, cough, fever, loss of smell/taste.
- Seek medical clearance from their GP if their child has a persistent runny nose or cough and no other symptoms of infectious illness. If this clearance states their child is not infectious, the child can return to the site.
- Keep their child home for 24 hours after last vomit or loose bowel movement if sent home for vomit or diarrhoea. No clearance is required after this 24 hour exclusion period has been completed.
- Understand that if they cannot collect their unwell child within 20 minutes, after half an hour emergency contacts will be called.
- Ensure contact details are current including details of emergency contacts.
- Understand that from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, they are entitled to 42 allowable absences for the 2020 – 2021 financial year. Absences will not be counted during the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package period (from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April until Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July).
- Be aware that additional bookings may not be available due to reduced staff and higher space requirements per child.
- Be aware there is a priority of access for approving additional bookings or re-enrolment of families, and they may go on the Centre's waiting list.

- If a child is not ill and does not attend care for a longer period, the family may wish to follow the established advice around longer absences (as set out in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#), noting that an enrolment automatically ceases when a child does not attend care for 14 weeks).
- Only send one person to complete drop offs and collections. If families need a longer time to discuss their child, they should arrange a time with their child's primary carer via phone or email.
- When entering the Centre, ensure they have agreed to the conditions of entering the site.
- Give permission for staff to sign children in and out on their behalf during the pandemic period.
- Be encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccination to protect themselves against strains of influenza and get flu vaccinations for their child due to children between 6 months and 5 years being considered high risk for complication from influenza.
- Be aware of social distancing guidelines during arrival and collection and adhering to markings on the pavers to keep 2m<sup>2</sup> distance between themselves and other families.
- Contact Centrelink if they are experiencing financial hardship to seek assistance with paying childcare fees i.e. applying for Additional Child Care Subsidy.
- Ensure they are regularly checking their email for communication from the Centre.
- Inform the site if they wish to have health service professionals attend the Centre to support their child and negotiate the professional's visits with site Leadership.
- Abide by any state specific guidelines set out by SA Health.

**EVALUATION:**

**National Quality Standards:**

**QA2: Children's Health and Safety**

**2.1.1.** Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.

**2.1.2** Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

**2.2** Each child is protected

**Implemented:** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

**Reviewed:** 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020

**Next Review:** When new information arises

**Source:** *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Management Policy*. Childcare Centre Desktop. Retrieved 23 March 2020.

**Resources:**

SA Health

Federal Department of Health