

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.

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

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

Other symptoms can include:

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

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 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 SA Health.
- Put control measures in place to eliminate/ 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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 unless otherwise advised by the Department for Education.
- Encourage facilitators or service providers who run groups, events or provide services on-site to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or follow appropriate safety measures if not vaccinated.
- Reserve 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.
- Ensure all people who enter the site are following appropriate hygiene guidelines including washing and sanitising their hands and signing visitor or staff attendance sheets.
- Notify the Department for Education and [Regulatory Authority](#) of any positive cases of COVID-19 on-site.
- 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.
- Reserve 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 text.
- Communicate process of reopening after a closure with families via email or text.
- Display prescribed information around confirmed cases at the site, if required.
- Follow standard local emergency procedures from 13th 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.
- 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 other staff have chosen to self-isolate in order to inform of staffing arrangements.
- Provide training and professional development for staff to complete at home if unwell or isolating.
- Provide single use pens for visitors and sanitise stationary as needed.
- Be aware of 'at-risk' children and families who attend the site and contact support agencies on these families' behalf if required.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Communicate with parents and families the risk mitigation strategies to be adhered to during any group celebrations.
- Ensure contact tracing methods (QR code and paper sign in) are available at any events.
- Ensure accurate attendance records are kept for contact tracing.
- Ensure a process is in place for key staff to continue working from home in the event of a closure (i.e. contact details for Leadership are available, devices are taken home every night etc.)
- Encourage all persons working on-site in a paid or voluntary capacity to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or if unvaccinated, follow appropriate hygiene and safety measures to reduce the chance of transmission.

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 SA Health and inform the Centre if they are required to self-isolate as a confirmed case or close contact.

- 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 after receiving a negative COVID test. Documentation is required for absences longer than 3 days and clearances may need to be presented before 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 7 days. They cannot return to work until they have no symptoms and have been advised they no longer need to isolate. 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 probable 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 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.
- Follow handwashing guidelines and support children to do so including using soap and water for at least 20 seconds when 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 as needed in addition to the end of day clean.
- Ensure chances for ventilation are maximised in the rooms via opening doors for indoor/outdoor play, airing out rooms when not in use and children are not in the space.
- 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 (refer to Illness Flowchart for specific steps and symptoms):

- 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 37.8°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 that if their child has been sent home with symptoms of COVID-19, they may need a doctor's clearance to return even if considered asymptomatic.
- 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 considering 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.
- Inform Leadership if self-isolating for any reason (i.e. confirmed case, contact with confirmed case, as precaution).

- Deliver an online curriculum as part of the Preschool program to families who cannot or choose not to attend Preschool during lockdown periods.
- 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.
- Ensure they have contact details to communicate with Leadership in the event of a closure.
- Be encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Staff who cannot or do not wish to be vaccinated will be required to follow other health/hygiene measures to reduce the chance of transmission of COVID-19.

Families will:

- Follow exclusion periods as dictated by SA Health and inform the Centre if they are required to self-isolate as a confirmed case or close contact.
- 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 support children to do so, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever they cough, sneeze, blow their nose, prepare food, 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 including with symptoms of illnesses other than COVID-19.
- 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.
- Be aware that if their child has been sent home with symptoms of COVID-19, they may need a doctor's clearance to return even if they consider their child asymptomatic.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 keep 1.5m 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.
- If attending events held by the Centre, RSVP in advance.
- Wear masks when inside the building.

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: 23rd March 2020 **Reviewed:** 17/05/2022 **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