

**Policy Statement**

Coronaviruses (COVID-19) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. The Delta variant causes more infections and spreads faster than early forms of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

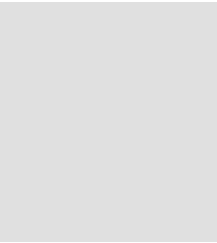
Our Preschool is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment that reduces the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19. In recognition of the rapid spread of this disease and the ongoing release of information from authorities, our service will respond swiftly and correctly to advice from authorities.

The best protection from COVID-19 is vaccination. Staff members who have not received mandated COVID-19 vaccinations and who unable to obtain a [medical exemption](#) from their doctor will not be able to attend early childhood education and care settings.

**Policy Goals**

Our Preschool will apply measures that prioritise health and safety We will:

- Ensure staff immunisation is in line with public health orders
- Implement vigilant hygiene practices that prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19.
- Encourage good health and sanitation.

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- Monitor sources of public health information.
  - Implement all measures recommended by authorities.
  - Educate and inform our community with current and trusted information.

## Strategies: How will it be done?

Practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 will include:

- Compliance with staff immunisation in line with public health orders
- Regular and thorough hand clean procedures with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or with soap and water.
- Encouraging children to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible.
- Following good respiratory hygiene, when coughing or sneezing:
  - cover mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue and
  - dispose of the used tissue immediately and
  - wash hands with soap and water or, if water is not available, use hand sanitiser
- Excluding children or staff who are unwell and reasonably suspected to have a communicable disease from the service until they are cleared by a doctor to return.
- Restricting excursions during this heightened risk period and conducting risk assessments prior in consideration of:
  - The latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and
  - Those at high risk such as those with medical conditions. Should there be any concerns regarding the health of a child at the service, families will be asked to seek medical attention. Further guidance may be sought from Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222.

## **Cleaning and hygiene**

A clean and hygienic environment is a high priority of our Preschool. During any infectious disease outbreak, routine environmental cleaning is increased in frequency, particularly on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches and bathroom areas and any toys/surfaces which may have been mouthed or in contact with bodily fluids. Surfaces are cleaned to reduce any soil, then disinfected to remove germs. Further advice regarding infectious cleaning will be sought from the local public health unit should there be any direct concern regarding the exposure of COVID-19 at the preschool.

## **Service of food and water**

Our Preschool follows strict food preparation and handling procedures, including properly cooking food and following good hand hygiene. Our preschool will follow any direction from the local public health unit in relation to changes in food preparation procedures or water quality.

## **Keeping Informed**

In recognition of the rapid and consistent release of information related to COVID-19, our preschool will refer to reliable authorities daily. Advice, directions and guidance will be:

- communicated to staff and families immediately and
- followed accordingly

### **Trusted sources of information include:**

- Australian Government Department of Health: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- State/territory specific COVID-19 health advice:  
[www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-information-by-state-and-territory](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-information-by-state-and-territory)
- COVID-19 information for the early childhood education and care sector:  
[www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare](http://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/childcare)
- National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080
- Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222
- The Regulatory Authority relevant to the service location: Local Public Health Unit:  
Goulburn Office: 1300 066 055

- CCSA: [COVID Updates webpage](#)
- Information on [cleaning after a COVID case](#).
- [Draft template](#) for families after a confirmed case in your service.
- Department of Education  
[webinar details COVID-19 guidelines for ECEC services](#)  
[Letter template](#) services can send to families to encourage families to keep children home.
- NSW Health: Medical [exemption form](#).
- Fairwork [information on vaccines](#).
- Contact our COVID support team via our Information and Enquiries team by calling 1800 619 113 or emailing [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

### **Notifying the Regulatory Authority**

Any incident that requires the Approved Provider to close or reduce the number of children at our service for a period will be notified to the State or territory Regulatory Authority within 24 hours.

- If a child or staff member at the service is diagnosed with COVID-19 this will be reported to the:
  - Regulatory Authority and
  - Local public health unit: [www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-andterritory-health-departments](http://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-andterritory-health-departments)
- A confirmed case of COVID-19 is a serious incident and as such will be notified as soon as practicable within 24 hours.
- Notifications will be made through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) or through direct contact via phone or email.
- Our preschool will remain diligent in reporting responsibilities and any directions provided to the service by the Department of Health.

## Role and Responsibilities

### Approved Provider

- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above.
- Consult with the Nominated supervisor to ensure all staff are meeting mandatory immunisation in line with public health orders.
- Regularly check updates from reliable sources and communicate these to the Nominated Supervisor and action accordingly.
- Ensure that required notifications are made within the defined time frame.
- Provide hand washing facilities and make sure these are kept clean, adequately stocked and in good working order.
- Provide PPE, including gloves.
- Ask staff who are sick with respiratory illness to stay home until recovered.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities and maintain confidentiality.
- Make appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-quarantine stay away.

### Nominated Supervisor

- Work with the Approved Provider to ensure all staff are meeting mandatory immunisation requirements in line with public health orders and that current and reliable information is communicated to families and staff and actioned accordingly.
- Adhere to quarantine requirements and enforce self-quarantine as directed by the public health unit.
- Notify the Approved Provider immediately if you need to self-quarantine, have a confirmed case of COVID-19, have recently travelled to an overseas destination or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Make appropriate arrangements so that staff who need to self-quarantine stay away from work.

- Assist the Approved Provider to make the required notifications within the defined timeframes.
- Arrange for any maintenance or ordering of supplies to ensure there are adequate hand washing facilities.
- Ensure tissues, hand sanitiser, PPE and cleaning products are available for use.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as through posters on handwashing and respiratory hygiene.
- Keep the service clean and hygienic.
- Ask staff who are sick with respiratory illness to stay home until
- recovered and seek medical advice.
- If children become sick while at the service, follow illness procedures to
- ensure they are isolated, and families are contacted.
- Advise families of sick children to seek medical advice. If they are very
- unwell, call an ambulance.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from
- the health authorities and maintain confidentiality.
- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above.

### **Early Childhood Educators**

- Keep the service clean and hygienic.
- Assist in regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces
- Advise families of sick children to seek medical advice. If they are very unwell, call an ambulance.
- If children become sick while at the preschool, follow illness procedures to ensure they are isolated, and families are contacted.
- Stay home if unwell.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, cooperate with directions from the health authorities and maintain confidentiality. Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 as listed above.
- Follow food preparation and handling procedures in conjunction with regular hand washing.

- Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately if you need to self-quarantine, have a confirmed case of COVID-19, have recently travelled to an overseas destination or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

## **Families**

- Follow practices to reduce the chance of being infected or spreading COVID-19 including regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand or with soap and water and following good respiratory hygiene when coughing or sneezing.
- Follow directions from the local public health unit (such as the need to self-quarantine) and inform the Nominated Supervisor if you have recently travelled to an overseas destination, have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Seek medical attention for your child should they be unwell.
- Immediately collect your child from the service if requested to do so by staff due to concerns for their health.

## **Monitor, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Preschool; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected

## Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

## Related Guidelines, Standards and Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety – Standards 2.1, 2.2, Elements 2.1.1, 2.1.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1, 6.2

## Resources/Useful Links

- Safework Australia: Early childhood education and care workers: Minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19:  
[www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/early-childhoodeducation-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19\\_0.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/early-childhoodeducation-minimising-the-risk-of-exposure-to-covid-19_0.pdf)
- Healthdirect Australia: Childcare, school exclusions, and COVID-19  
[www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-fags](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-school-exclusions-fags)
- World Health Organisation (WHO): Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
- Fair Work Ombudsman: Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws:  
<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au>
- Australian Government Department of Health: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert: [www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert](http://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert)
- Coronavirus information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents



[www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-forschools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents\\_0.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-forschools-and-early-childhood-centres-students-and-parents_0.pdf)

- National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080
- Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222
- The relevant state/territory Regulatory Authority:  
[www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-your-regulatory-authority](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-your-regulatory-authority)
- Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) - coronavirus (COVID-19) statement on 3 April 2020: [www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc](http://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principalcommittee-ahppc)
- To obtain a [medical exemption](#) for vaccination .

**Updated**

April 2022

**Review Date**

2024 or when procedure, practice or legislation changes.